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WISSENSCHAFTEN



COLLÈGE
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— 1530 —

EINLADUNG ZUM VORTRAG

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON ORIGINS OF THE FIRE TEMPLES

RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES IN PRE-ACHEMENID AND
ACHEMENID CENTRAL ASIA

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Fire temples are a major part of the archaeological landscape in Iran, but at the moment all documented examples (except for one) date from the Sasanian period. The question of genesis and typology have been assessed by many authors, such as M. Boyce (1975), R. Boucharlat (1985), P. Callieri (2014).

At the same time, the question of the origins has, for the main, remained in the state which had been formulated by Mary Boyce (1975; refined in 1982): as fire temples are documented in the post-Achemid period in regions which had ceased to be part of Iran after Alexander's conquest, they were necessarily an Achemenid creation, which Boyce attributed to the imperial family under Artaxerxes II, and explained as a counter-measure meant to appease the «orthodox» after image temples had been established under Babylonian influence, also by royal patronage.

This picture has recently been challenged by fresh discoveries in Central Asia e.g. at Cheshme Shafa near Balkh, in Southern Sogdiana (Kyzyl-tepe, Sangir-tepe, Kindyk-tepe), and in Areia (Topaz Gala) still little publicized. Even if a caution is needed for such conclusions, it seems already possible to propose a new model for the respective origins of the image temple and the fire temple: the first one probably traceable to a Babylonian tradition, but the second one originated in the eastern satrapies from which it would have reached Western Iran under the Achemenids, in a movement parallel (or related?) to the diffusion of the Avesta.

Zur Person Frantz Grenet

Im Zentrum der wissenschaftlichen Arbeit von Frantz Grenet steht die Geschichte und Kultur Zentralasiens im Spannungsfeld zwischen der griechisch-römischen Welt, Iran und China in vorislamischer Zeit. Bereits seine 1984 erschienene Dissertation „Les pratiques funéraires dans l'Asie centrale sédentaire, de la conquête grecque à l'islamisation“, wurde zu einem Standardzitierwerk und mit dem Prix Delalandre-Guérineau der Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres ausgezeichnet.

Durch seine langjährige Tätigkeit als Direktor der französisch-usbekischen archäologischen Mission (seit 1989) trug er maßgebend zur Erforschung von Afrasiab (das antike Samarkand) und der sogdianischen Kultur bei. Archäologie, Religions- und Kulturgeschichte des antiken Sogdian und Baktrien im Schnittpunkt iranischer, griechischer und indischer Einflusssphären bildeten fortan einen besonderen Schwerpunkt seiner wissenschaftlichen Arbeit, wobei er die Geschichte dieses Raumes in einem völlig neuen Licht erstehen ließ.

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